

Dear Colleagues:

I am writing to provide you with an update on recent congressional legislation that contains language that will affect the competition for our national laboratories.

The University of California has been working closely with congressional members to ensure that the FY 2004 Energy and Water Appropriations bill allows for the development of a level playing field among competitors for laboratory contracts. Additionally we sought to ensure that it allows the Department of Energy (DOE) the flexibility to tailor a competition that will attract both non-profits, such as UC, and for profit entities. We are pleased that the legislation includes these provisions and the University appreciates that the congressional conferees recognized our concerns in these and other areas. We expect the legislation will be enacted by the Congress next week and signed into law shortly thereafter.

The Energy and Water Appropriations bill also calls for laboratory contracts that have been in place for more than fifty years to be put up for competition. This legislative language means that Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL), Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL), Ames Laboratory, and Argonne National Laboratory will be put out for bid at the end of their existing contract. Under the legislation, DOE has the ability to issue up to a two-year extension to any of these contracts.

While there are still unknowns, including what the final Request for Proposals (RFP) for each of the competitions will look like, I want to assure you that the University of California is preparing as if we will compete. The final decision regarding competition will be made by the UC Board of Regents. An important element in that decision will be the degree to which the RFPs make academic and scientific excellence a key part of the selection criteria.

Be assured that we are following these issues closely and are aware that you may have concerns. In the coming months, I intend to continue to visit each of the UC-managed national laboratories, and I hope that these visits will provide an opportunity to engage in fruitful discussion on these and other issues that I know are very important to you. In the meantime, I ask that you remain focused on your mission at the laboratories and continue to work on the valuable science and technology that is so important to our nation.

Sincerely,  
S. Robert Foley  
Vice President for Laboratory Management  
University of California